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Mr. Jeffrey McVey
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Mrs. Audrey Sleight
Board Secretary

Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW,
Washington, DC 20554

October 23, 2017

Dear Chairman Pai,

I am writing today in response to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Public Notice which, among other things, considers changes to the E-Rate program. Before delving into my response to the proposed changes, I want to thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program and for the critical programmatic and policy changes the commission adopted in 2014. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access. NKASD is an urban-suburban school district in Southwestern Pennsylvania. As a Community Eligibility Program participant the District counts on E-Rate dollars for internet access, fiber-optic transport lines, and category 2 funds to replace WAP's and network edge switches. Our network is extensively used for instruction.

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this public notice, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works. Any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential and ensuring the FCC remains a good steward of the changes adopted in 2014, allowing those changes to progress and play out as intended.

E-Rate played a critical role in the rapid and significant expansion of connectivity in schools, and the 2014 modernization was a much-needed update to ensure more schools and libraries are connected to broadband. The E-Rate's investment in Category 2 Wi-Fi and internal connections funding is extremely valuable and could not be replaced by school, district, or state funds.

The NKASD has used the majority of its E-Rate Category 2 allotment for the 2017-18 funding year to replace/upgrade wireless access points in all of its buildings and replace/upgrade edge switches in all buildings. With the ever-increasing demand on wireless networks and declining funding available to districts like ours, Category 2 funds are critical for providing our students access to the online presence required of providing a 21st Century Educational environment.

In closing, I reiterate my district's continued, strong support for and reliance upon the E-Rate program for being able to access and afford the high-speed connectivity that is so central to our students' learning. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Jon Banko, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent